

- Simmons, K. E. L. 1968. Occurrence and behaviour of the Red-footed Booby at Ascension Island, 1962-64. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 88: 15-20.
- Simmons, K. E. L. 1970. Ecological determinants of breeding adaptations and social behaviour in two fish-eating birds. In *Social Behaviour in Birds and Mammals* (ed. J. H. Crook): 37-77. Academic Press.
- Simmons, K. E. L. 1972. Some adaptive features of seabird plumage types. *Brit. Birds* 65: 465-479, 510-521.
- Stonehouse, B. 1960. *Wideawake Island*. Hutchinson.
- Stonehouse, B. 1962. Ascension Island and the British Ornithologists' Union Centenary Expedition, 1957-59. *Ibis* 103b: 107-123.
- Tomlinson, J. N. 1947. Occurrence of the Red-footed Booby at Ascension Island. *Ibis* 89: 122-123.

Address: Dr K. E. L. Simmons, 66 Romway Road, Leicester LE5 5SB, UK.

© British Ornithologists' Club 1990

Presumed breeding of Tawny Pipits *Anthus campestris* in the Afrotropics

by J. S. Ash & J. E. Miskell

Received 11 June 1990

A male Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* with advanced gonads is mentioned for Somalia in Ash & Miskell (1983, 1988). This particular bird was one of several pale pipits seen resembling *A. campestris* in the northern part of the country in May 1979, and one of 2 of which were collected. Because such records were particularly interesting and unlikely to be rechecked in the field in the foreseeable future, the 2 specimens were deposited in the British Museum (Natural History), Tring. Identification as *A. campestris* was confirmed after comparison with other material, and agreed by P. R. Colston, who kindly twice rechecked and reconfirmed this at our request. Collecting details of the 2 specimens are as follows: Ref. 650, ♂ 1 May 1979 at 5 km SW of Bacaadaweyn (7°09'N, 47°31'E), testes 5 mm—BM Registration No. 1982/3/15; Ref. 691, ♂ 15 May 1979 at 37 km WSW of War Idaad (9°10'N, 45°59'E), testes 7 mm—BM Registration No. 1980/7/5.

Field observations

A bird similar to the one collected on 15 May was seen on the same day at 4 km WSW of War Idaad (9°17'N, 46°13'E). Next day 2 pairs were actively nest-building at 19 km east of War Idaad (9°19'N, 46°25'E). There was no doubt that all these birds were the same species, but we were not entirely certain at the time that they were Tawny Pipits.

Further birds, possibly the same species, but not described in sufficient detail for later reassessment, were common on 3 May at a lake 6 km west of Oog (8°56'N, 46°34'E), between War Idaad and Bacaadaweyn; the nest of one of these pairs contained 3 eggs on a revisit on 23 May. A further 2 were

seen 35 km south of Garadag at 9°12'N, 46°45'E also on 23 May. During the 3 weeks 3–23 May 1979, travelling through central northern Somalia to the east of the area in which the above Tawny Pipits occurred, and further east still in April and May 1980, pipits which presented identification difficulties were seen at a number of sites. Some of these birds were claimed as *novaeseelandiae*, including pale greyish birds near Eil (7°59'N, 49°49'E), but others were not identified.

A combination of 2 pairs nest-building in May of a species which usually leaves the area on return passage north by the end of March, together with 2 males with developed gonads, would seem to indicate at least intent to breed. May is also the breeding season for *novaeseelandiae* in northern Somalia. However, birds recorded under *A. novaeseelandiae* by Ash & Miskell (1983) from squares 21c and 28b, and breeding in 28b, should be deleted pending confirmed identification of this species in that area.

Status of Tawny Pipits in the eastern Afrotropics and Arabian peninsula

Somalia. Sir Geoffrey Archer found Tawny Pipits only twice during his long stay in north Somalia (ex British Somaliland), but summarised the other records in Archer & Godman (1961). Among these, of special interest are records of 7 and 3 being collected on 1–6 and 28 February 1919 respectively at Las Khorei (*sic*) (= Laasqoray) (11°09'N, 48°12'E) on the northern coast. In the country as a whole Tawny Pipits are regarded as fairly common Palaearctic migrants overwintering regularly south to 9°N, and occasionally as far south as 1°N (Ash & Miskell 1983). Our latest spring date for a returning migrant is 11 March, but Witherby & Hamerton (1905) have a later record on 1 April. There has been no previous suspicion of breeding in the country.

Ethiopia. Described by Urban & Brown (1971) as an abundant winter visitor in the north, extending south to Addis Ababa and the Rift Valley. J.S.A. found that it was uncommon in the southern part of its range as far as 7°N, and altogether absent in western areas south of 12°N. With the exception of a record in June (Ash 1980), a date perhaps indicating a possible breeding bird, there are no dates for migrants remaining after early April. The latest are 7 April (Blanchard 1969) and 8 April (Ash 1980).

Kenya. A scarce and probably extralimital Palaearctic migrant, October–March, to as far south as c. 3°50'S (Britton 1980, Lewis & Pomeroy 1989). The possibility that *campestris* breeding in the Afrotropics may reach Kenya as an intratropical migrant should be borne in mind.

Sudan. A fairly common Palaearctic migrant winter visitor, October–April, south to 11°N, but only exceptional further south (Nikolaus 1987).

Arabian Peninsula. Meinertzhagen (1954) regarded *campestris* as a winter visitor only, and not uncommon. More recently M. C. Jennings regarded it as quite common, and furthermore has 2 records from western Saudi Arabia which suggest that birds were holding breeding territories: on 5 March 1986 there were paired singing males holding territory at

Harrat Khaybar (25°40'N, 40°00'E), and in April 1989 there was a pair "faithful to one area" at Hemma Fiqrah (24°18'N, 38°53'E). In Jennings' experience Tawny Pipits do not sing in their winter quarters in Arabia.

Discussion

A. campestris is a reasonably common winter visitor to the northeast of the Afrotropical region, extending furthest south in the eastern part of its range. Breeding in Africa is known to occur only in the northwest in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, south to 27°N; but further to the east breeding is unknown south of 30°N, in Israel and Jordan (Cramp 1988, Hollom *et al.* 1988). There has been no suggestion that breeding occurs elsewhere in the region of the Afrotropics under discussion, nor in the area to its north covering Egypt and the Arabian peninsula—with the possible exception of the birds seen by Jennings. Breeding in Somalia, some 2400 km away from the Tawny Pipits nearest breeding area in the Palaearctic, could be of irregular occurrence only, although the possibility of breeding in Arabia suggests that breeding distribution may be less discontinuous than it has so far appeared to be.

The situation in Somalia requires further study. It may be significant that there are no specimen records of *novaeseelandiae* east of the above May records of *campestris*. The observation of pale rather *novaeseelandiae*-like birds in eastern N. Somalia suggests that there is either a pale population of *novaeseelandiae* in the area, or else that *campestris* replaces *novaeseelandiae* there.

A. campestris can easily be overlooked in areas where other large *Anthus* species, such as *novaeseelandiae*, *leucophrys* and particularly *similis* occur, all of which can present special problems in identification. Our N. Somalia specimens of *campestris* are considered by Colston to be intermediate between *A. c. griseus* and *A. c. campestris*.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank M. C. Jennings for his information on Tawny Pipits in the Arabian peninsula, P. R. Colston for checking the identification of the Somalia specimens in the British Museum (Natural History), and Dr D. J. Pearson for his comments on the ms.

References:

- Archer, G. F. & Godman, E. M. 1961. *The Birds of British Somaliland and the Gulf of Aden*. Vol. 4. Oliver & Boyd.
- Ash, J. S. 1980. Migrational status of Palaearctic birds in Ethiopia. *Proc. IV Pan-Afr. Orn. Congr.* 199–208.
- Ash, J. S. & Miskell, J. E. 1983. *Birds of Somalia*. *Scopus* Special Supplement No. 1, 97 pages.
- Ash, J. S. & Miskell, J. E. 1988. Observations on birds in Somalia in 1978–1982, together with a bibliography of recent literature. *Scopus* 11: 57–78.
- Blanchard, D. H. 1969. *Ethiopia: its Culture and its Birds*. The Naylor Company.
- Britton, P. L. (ed.) 1980. *Birds of East Africa*. EANHIS, Nairobi.
- Cramp, S. 1988. *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa: the Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Vol. 5. Oxford University Press.
- Hollom, P. A. D., Porter, R. F., Christensen, S. & Willis, I. 1988. *Birds of the Middle East and North Africa*. T. & A. D. Poyser.
- Lewis, A. & Pomeroy, D. 1989. *A Bird Atlas of Kenya*. Balkema.
- Meinertzhagen, R. 1954. *Birds of Arabia*. Oliver & Boyd.

- Nikolaus, G. 1987. Distribution atlas of Sudan's birds with notes on habitat and status. *Bonn. Zool. Monogr.* Nr. 25. Museum Alexander Koenig.
- Urban, E. K. & Brown, L. H. 1971. *A Checklist of the Birds of Ethiopia*. Hailé Selassié I University Press.
- Witherby, H. F. & Hamerton, A. E. 1905. On a collection of birds from Somaliland. *Ibis* 5(8): 509–524.

Addresses: Dr J. S. Ash, Godshill Wood, Fordingbridge, Hants. SP6 2LR, U.K. J. E. Miskell, CARE-Uganda, P.O. Box 7280, Kampala, Uganda.

© British Ornithologists' Club 1990.

Harrier-like hunting behaviour by a Crane Hawk *Geranospiza caerulescens*

by Fabio Olmos

Received 21 June 1990

The Crane Hawk *Geranospiza caerulescens* is widely distributed in a number of subspecies from Mexico to Argentina, living in various habitats, from rain forest to mangroves, but generally near water (Brown & Amadon 1968: 376–378). Recent literature (Brown & Amadon 1968: 378, Sick 1985: 214) emphasizes that this hawk explores cavities and crevices in bark, trunks and epiphytes with its feet and bill for food. The anatomical structure of the hind limbs is specially adapted for this (Burton 1978).

On 6 September 1988, at c. 08.00 hrs I observed a Crane Hawk foraging along a dry mud strip with scattered herbs alongside the Transantaneira Highway (c. 56°59'W, 17°16'S), Mato Grosso, Brazil. For a general description of the area see Schaller & Crawshaw (1982).

When first seen, the hawk was hanging motionless about c. 3 m above the ground, looking directly downwards, facing into the strong prevailing wind. Suddenly the hawk dropped with half folded wings, spiralling down through 360° before landing and grasping a small item (probably an insect) with its left foot, which it picked at with its bill and swallowed. After looking around for a few moments the hawk walked 2 steps and jumped, opening its wings and gaining height by facing the wind, without flapping its wings. At a height of 2–3 m the hawk managed to progress forward by only slightly adjusting its wings, progressing slowly for a few metres before dropping again.

This process was repeated 6 times along a 30 m stretch. In 5 instances small items (probably insects or small frogs) were caught; in one the hawk landed on a pile of dry skin and hairs left from a mammal carcass and examined it briefly with the bill. At this point the hawk detected me and flew away with strong wing beats.

Sutton (1954) writing about the northern form *G. c. nigra* (once considered a full species) reported seeing this hawk hunting on the wing over open ground like a harrier. This hunting method appears not to have been